

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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R 281900Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3613

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 25566

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJECT: POMPIDOU'S PRESS CONFERENCE: DOMESTIC ASPECTS

REF: PARIS 25405

1. SUMMARY. DOMESTIC PORTION OF PRESS CONFERENCE INCLUDED
QUESTIONS ON POMPIDOU'S PLANS AND AIMS, THE LABOR SCENE, ABORTION
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REFORM AND FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC MATTERS (LATTER REPORTED
SEPTEL). MOST PRESS COMMENT CHARACTERIZED CONFERENCE AS NOTHING
NEW ALTHOUGH COMMUNISTS EXTREMELY CRITICAL OF POMPIDOU'S
REMARKS ON CHILE (REFTEL) AND GAULLIST OLD GUARD CONCERNED

ACCORDING TO PRESS, OVER POMPIDOU'S "DECLARATION OF
INDEPENDENCE" FROM "NEOLITHIC GAULLISTS."
END SUMMARY

2. MAJOR PORTION OF THE DOMESTIC PART OF PRESS CONFERENCE
DEVOTED TO POMPIDOU'S PLANS FOR CONTINUING IN THE PRESIDENCY
AND THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO REDUCE HIS TERM
FROM SEVEN TO FIVE YEARS. ON THE FIRST POINT, POMPIDOU SAID,
"I AM READY TO PUT MY CAPACITIES AT THE SERVICE OF THE FRENCH
PEOPLE FOR AS LONG AS THEY WISH AND FOR AS LONG AS I CAN."
HE SAID THAT HE HAD PROPOSED THE AMENDMENT BECAUSE HE THOUGHT
IT NECESSARY THAT PRESIDENT CONSULT THE NATION MORE OFTEN
THAN ONCE IN SEVEN YEARS. ALSO INCUMBENT
PRESIDENTS TEND TO WISH TO RUN AGAIN, AND TWO TERMS, EVEN OF
FIVE YEARS EACH, WERE ALREADY QUITE A LOT. ASKED WHETHER THE
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT CONCERNED POMPIDOU PERSONALLY, THE
PRESIDENT SAID HE HAD NO INTENTION OF RESIGNING AND THEN
RUNNING AGAIN. THE DRAFT LAW CLEARLY STATED THAT IT WOULD
APPLY ONLY AFTER THE NEXT ELECTION, IN 1976. HE ADDED IT
IS TOO EARLY FOR HIM TO DECIDE WHETHER HE WOULD BE A
CANDIDATE IN TWO AND A HALF YEARS. IN ANY CASE, IF HE
HAD DECIDED, HE WAS "CERTAINLY NOT ABOUT TO REVEAL THIS
DECISION." ASKED WHETHER HE WAS FAVORABLE TO LIMITING AN
INCUMBENT PRESIDENT TO TWO TERMS, HE SAID THAT HE WAS PERSONALLY
OPPOSED TO THIS AND CITED THE EXAMPLE OF PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S
THIRD TERM; "IF IN 1940 PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT HAD BEEN UNABLE
TO RUN AGAIN, WOULD THIS NOT HAVE BEEN UNFORTUNATE FOR THE
US, FOR ALL OF EUROPE AND, IN ANY CASE, FOR FRANCE?"

3. POMPIDOU WAS ASKED IF HE THOUGHT THAT "POMPIDOUISM" WAS
BEING CREATED, REPLACING GAULLISM. POMPIDOU REPLIED WITH
UNUSUAL FORCE AND FIRMNESS THAT HE WAS FOR TWENTY YEARS
THE GENERAL'S CLOSEST COLLABORATOR AND DURING THE FIRST TEN OF
THOSE YEARS, HE SERVED A MAN WHO HE WAS CONVINCED WOULD NEVER
RETURN TO POWER "BECAUSE THE FOURTH REPUBLIC WOULD NEVER MAKE
ENOUGH MISTAKES TO OPEN THE ROAD." DURING THIS PERIOD, POM-
PIDOU HAD REFUSED ALL PARLIAMENTARY AND MINISTERIAL POSTS.
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HIS GAULLISM WAS TOTAL, PERSONAL AND DISINTERESTED. "THAT'S
WHY I HAVE NO LESSONS IN GAULLISM TO LEARN FROM ANYONE."
MOREOVER, POMPIDOU STATED THAT TIME HAD NOT STOPPED WITH THE
GENERAL'S RESIGNATION. POMPIDOU WAS DOING HIS BEST TO CARRY OUT
SUITABLE POLICIES. HE WOULD NOT HIDE BEHIND THE GENERAL'S
NAME AND HE WOULD NOT SAY THAT HE WAS DOING WHAT DE GAULLE
WOULD HAVE DONE. HE DENIED THAT ANYONE COULD SAY WHAT DE
GAULLE WOULD HAVE DONE IN A GIVEN SITUATION.

4. SOCIAL MATTERS. ASIDE FROM IMMIGRANT LABOR AND RACISM
(REPORTED REFTEL), POMPIDOU WAS ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE LIP
AFFAIR (THE WATCH FACTORY TAKEN OVER AND RUN BY ITS WORKERS
FOR A TIME). POMPIDOU SAID THAT HE HAD REFUSED TO ENTER THE

NEGOTIATIONS ON A SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM. HE THEN MADE A FEW GENERAL COMMENTS. FIRST, THAT IT IS INCORRECT TO REFER TO THE LIP WORKERS ACTUALLY RUNNING THE PLANT ("AUTO-GESTION") (THEY HAD BEEN RUNNING DOWN OLD STOCKS, PAYING NO TAXES, ETC) SECOND, THAT THE STATE HAD INTERVENED ONLY TO HELP THE WORKERS WHO WERE OTHERWISE BOUND TO BECOME UNEMPLOYED. IT WAS WRONG IN ANY EVENT FOR THE STATE TO TAKE OVER TROUBLED SMALL AND MEDIUM FIRMS AND TO SUBSIDIZE THEIR CONTINUING LOSSES. TO DO SO WOULD BE TO CONDEMN THE ECONOMY TO A SLOWER GROWTH RATE AND AN EVENTUAL DECLINE IN THE STANDARD OF LIVING. IT WAS ALSO TRUE, HOWEVER, THAT THE LIP AFFAIR SHOWED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD OVERHAUL ITS LEGISLATION CONCERNING BANKRUPT COMPANIES.

5. RESPNDING TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED ABORTION REFORM, THE PRESIDENT STATED THAT HE WAS PERSONALLY OPPOSED TO SUCH A PRACTICE, BUT THAT HE FELT IT WRONG TO SUBSTITUTE THE STATE FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL WHICH IN THIS AREA MUST BE PARAMOUNT. THE ABORTION REFORM PROPOSAL IN ANY CASE MERELY TOLERATED AN INDIVIDUAL'S DECISION BY NO LONGER FORBIDDING ABORTIONS. IT DID NOT ENCOURAGE THEM. IN ANY CASE, THE LAW HAD YET TO PASS THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

6. REACTION IN THE PRESS AND BY POLITICAL FIGURES WAS MOSTLY AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED (SEE SEPTEL FOR ROUNDUP OF PRESS COMMENT). COMMENTATORS MOSTLY AGREE THAT THE PRESIDENT, THOUGH FAT, DID NOT LOOK NOR ACT LIKE A SICK PERSON. ON THE CONTRARY, HE WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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INCISIVE AND FORCEFUL AND EFFORTLESSLY DOMINATED THE CONFERENCE. COMMUNIST COMMENT AND THE EDITORIAL IN PARTY ORGAN HUMANITE WAS DEVOTED TO THE PRESIDENT'S REFUSAL TO CONDEMN THE COUP AND THE JUNTA'S ACTIONS IN CHILE. CRITICISM OF HIS HANDLING OF THE CHILEAN SITUATION WAS WIDESPREAD AMONG SOCIALIST AND CENTRIST POLITICIANS. SOCIALIST LEADER CLAUDE ESTIER EXPRESSED "SHOCK" AT THE WAY IN WHICH THE PRESIDENT HAD LIGHTLY TREATED THE SITUATION IN CHILE. COMMENT FROM CENTRIST LEADERS (INCLUDING JEAN LECANUET) DEPLORED THE ABSENCE OF ANY MAJOR INITIATIVE IN ANY FIELD, FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC. THE LACK OF INITIATIVES ON EUROPE AND LIP PARTICULARLY WERE THE SUBJECT OF OPPOSITION COMMENT FROM THE CENTER.

7. COMMENT. POMPIDOU HANDLED THE DOMESTIC PORTIONS OF HIS PRESS CONFERENCE WITTILY, SKILLFULLY AND LIGHTLY. THE FACT THAT THE OPPOSITION HAD ONLY THE CHILEAN COUP ON WHICH TO COMMENT IS INDICATIVE OF HOW FEW OPPORTUNITIES THE PRESIDENT'S ANSWERS OFFERED THEM. HIS COMMENTS ON GAULLISM CERTAINLY BROUGHT NO COMFORT TO THE ULTRA-GAULLISTS, OF WHOM FORMER PRIME MINISTERS DEBRE AND COUVE DE MURVILLE REFUSED TO COMMENT ON THE PRESS CONFERENCE. HIS HANDLING OF THE QUESTIONS ON THE REDUCTION IN HIS TERM AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE MIGHT RUN AGAIN WERE COLD

COMFORT TO THOSE FROM THE MAJORITY PARTIES WHO HOPE TO REPLACE
HIM IN THE ELYSEE IN 1976.
IRWIN

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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TAGS: PINT, FR
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BONN
BRUSSELS
COPENHAGEN
DUBLIN
LONDON
LUXEMBOURG

ROME
THE HAGUE
EC BRUSSELS
NATO
BORDEAUX
LYON
MARSEILLE
MARTINIQUE
NICE
STRASBOURG

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